

15 JUL 1999

Chen-Seats

OPPOSITION DISCUSSING STATE SEATS TO CONTEST

SEREMBAN, July 15 (Bernama) -- The DAP, Parti Keadilan Nasional (Keadilan), PAS and Parti Rakyat Malaysia (PRM) at state level have submitted their proposals on the distribution of peninsular state seats to contest in the general election for discussion by the technical committee at federal level.

DAP chairman Dr Chen Man Hin said today the committee would also discuss proposals on the distribution of parliamentary seats for peninsular Malaysia.

Under the proposal for Negeri Sembilan, the DAP would contest three parliamentary seats -- Rasah, Seremban and Telok Kemang -- and 10 state seats while the rest would go to PAS and Keadilan.

He said the proposed 48:48:48 ratio for the 144 parliamentary seats in the peninsula among the three parties was also being discussed by the technical committee. Under the proposal, the DAP would give several seats allocated it to Parti Rakyat Malaysia (PRM).

The formula was just a proposal by the DAP and no decision had been made by the committee, he said when contacted, here.

He said although the seat allocation was a complicated matter, he was confident that a decision supported by all would be reached.

As such, he described as untrue news reports today that the proposal for equal distribution of the 144 seats was a ploy by the DAP and PAS to strengthen their position by ignoring the interest of the other parties in the opposition pact.

Former DAP deputy national publicity secretary Hu Sepang was reported to have said that the main victim of the distribution formula was Keadilan because it would get the "killer constituencies", namely the umno strongholds.

Dr Chen's political secretary Lim Fui Ming, who was asked by Dr Chen to comment on Hu's statement, questioned why Hu had come out to make negative comments about the opposition parties after such a long hiatus from politics.

On Umno secretary-general Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob's statement that Umno doubted that PAS, DAP and Keadilan could equally divide the seats among them, Dr Chen said that in politics nothing was impossible.

"Although it is difficult (to divide the seats), cooperation among the four parties is easier than in Barisan Nasional (BN) which has many component parties," he said.

On acting Umno Youth leader Datuk Hishamuddin Tun Hussein's challenge to the party to an open debate on current issues over an international network like Cable News Network (CNN) or Cable News Broadcasting Corporation (CNBC), he said he welcomed the move.

He said it was good for Malaysian politics because the debate would have a wide viewership.

He added that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad or his deputy, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, should also take part in the debate if DAP secretary-general Lim Kit Siang participated.

Meanwhile, in KUALA LUMPUR, PRM denied that the DAP's distribution formula had been fully agreed on by the other parties.

It said in a statement that it also did not know about the DAP's agreement to give some of its seats to PRM.

"The PRM is capable of negotiating with the other parties on the seats

it wants and need not depend on any party," it said.

It also said that the DAP's coming out with inaccurate statements would only aggravate the situation as it had attempted to involve other parties.

-- BERNAMA

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